

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13  
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-----211847Z 049207 /41

P R 211736Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4734  
INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 1441

EO 11652 GDS  
TAGS: PINT, HA  
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SHAKEUP IMMINENT?

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RUMORS ABOUND IN PORT AU PRINCE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME MAJOR POLITICAL MOVE, IN CONNECTION WITH THE SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER'S RULE ON APRIL 22, DESIGNED TO BUTTRESS THE PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY AT A TIME OF SERIOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND GENERAL MALAISE. NUMEROUS SIGNS POINT TO POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION, INCLUDING EVEN THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF. WHAT FORM THESE CHANGES MIGHT TAKE IS NOT YET KNOWN, AND THEIR EXTENT WILL DEPEND ON THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF DUVALIERISTS ON THE ONE HAND AND HIS MOTHER AND THE OLD GUARD ON THE OTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. EVOLUTION OF GOH POLICY. THE CURRENT MOOD OF POLITICAL EXPECTANCY DERIVES FROM THE MIXED RECORD OF REGIME SUCCESS AND FAILURE, PARTICULARLY SINCE 1976. THE SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESIDENT'S RULE IS ACCORDED SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE UNDER FORMER CONSTITUTIONS THE NORMAL PRESIDENTIAL TERM OF OFFICE WAS SIX YEARS. JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER, WHOSE CHOICE AT  
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AGE 19 TO BE HIS FATHER'S SUCCESSOR AS PRESIDENT-FOR-LIFE WAS APPROVED BY REFERENDUM ONLY THREE MONTHS BEFORE FRANCOIS DUVALIER'S DEATH, HAS GRADUALLY TRIED TO SHED THE REGRESSIVE ASPECTS OF PAPA DOC'S 14-YEAR RULE. MAJOR STEPS WERE THE DISMISSAL LAST SEPTEMBER OF NOTORIOUSLY CORRUPT REGIE DU TABAC DIRECTOR HENRI SICLAIT, THE CHRISTMAS AMNESTY OF 164 PRISONERS, AND THE DECISION TO DEVOTE 50 PERCENT OF REGIE'S HITHERTO EXTRA-

BUDGETARY RECEIPTS TO DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE HAITIAN PRESIDENT. AT FIRST APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF ANY DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION TOWARD THIS REGIME, HE HAS COME TO TAKE A MORE BALANCED VIEW, REASSURED BY THE CONSTRUCTIVE COUNSEL OF FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS AND GOH AMBASSADORS SALOMON (U.S.) AND CHARLES (UN). DUVALIER SEEMS TO HAVE A NEW RESPECT FOR U.S. OPINION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (THE RECENT VISITS OF CONGRESSMEN RODINO AND RANGEL AND SENATOR BROOKE HAVE HELPED) AND IS SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO RESPOND MORE FULLY TO THESE CONCERNS WITHOUT ENDANGERING HIS CONTROL.

3. EFFECT OF CRISES. THE MULTIPLE CRISES (ELECTRICITY, WATER, INFLATION, FAMINE) BROUGHT TO A HEAD IN MARCH BY DROUGHT AND CHRONIC GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT HAVE MADE THE PRESIDENT REALISE, AS NEVER BEFORE, THE EXTENT OF THE POLITICAL MALAISE AND THE LIMITS TO SHORT-TERM EXPEDIENT MEASURES. HE HAS TWICE CHASTISED HIS CABINET IN RECENT WEEKS FOR AN IRRESPONSIBLE LACK OF FORESIGHT AND HAS APPARENTLY CONCLUDED THAT BASIC CHANGES MUST BE MADE IN THE STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT, EVEN AT THE RISK OF "OLD GUARD" DISPLEASURE. WE ALSO DETECT AN ELEMENT OF BOREDOM AND FRUSTRATION OF THE YOUNG PRESIDENT WITH THE TRADITIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON HAITIAN GOVERNMENTS AND A SENSE THAT UNLESS HE MOVES STRONGLY NOW, HE WILL BECOME A PRISONER OF THOSE CONSTRAINTS.

4. APRIL 6 SPEECH. THE PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR FRANK AND OPEN NATIONAL DISCUSSION, A BREAK WITH THE "IMMOBILITY" OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAST, AND THE REFORM OF "ANTIQUATED AND FALTERING" INSTITUTIONS WAS COINED IN CANDID, SOBER TERMS -- CONTRASTING WITH THE USUAL DUVALIERIST RHETORIC. HE ACKNOWLEDGED HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DIFFICULTIES AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PUBLIC PATIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY. THE MORE DARING ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA ENTHUSIASTICALLY SEIZED ON HIS ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AND HAVE USED THE PRESIDENT'S OWN WORDS TO EXPAND AUDACIOUSLY UPON THE ATTITUDES AND INSTITUTIONS WHICH THEY HOLD MUST BE CHANGED TO FOSTER GENUINE DEVELOPMENT AND GREATER FREEDOMS. THEY ARE, IN EFFECT, FORCING THE PRESIDENT'S HAND. SOME OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AS AN EFFORT TO APPEAL OVER THE HEADS OF THE REACTIONARY AND ENTRENCHED ELEMENTS AROUND HIM FOR BROADER POPULAR AND MORE "DEMOCRATIC" SUPPORT. AT THE SAME TIME, OF COURSE, HE DISASSOCIATES HIMSELF FROM THE FAILINGS OF THE PAST.

5. NEW SESSION OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. THE FORMAL

OPENING OF THE 1977 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SESSION APRIL 22  
PROVIDES AN OCCASION FOR A MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT. RUMORS  
ABOUT WHAT DUVALIER MIGHT SAY RANGE FROM PRESIDENTIAL  
RESIGNATION AND DECLARATION OF ELECTIONS UNDER A SIX-YEAR  
PRESIDENTIAL TERM (AN AUNLIKELY GAMBIT AT THIS POINT) TO  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND IMPORTANT CABINET  
CHANGES. WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT A REVISED CONSTITUTION  
IS BEING DRAFTED WHICH, IF PROMULGATED, WOULD PROBABLY  
MAKE A BOW IN THE DIRECTION OF GREAT REPRESENTATION,  
PERHAPS BY ACTUALLY ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY (REDUCED TO AN HISTORICAL NADIR BY FRANCOIS  
DUVALIER). THE NEWLY SELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY,  
THE ARTICULATE, BROADLY POPULAR VICTOR NEVERS CONSTANT,  
TELLS US HE HAS PRESIDENTIAL BACKING TO INVEST THE ASSEMBLY  
WITH NEW AUTHORITY AND CLAIMS THAT HIS ADDRESS AT THE OPENING  
SESSSION WILL SHOW THAT THE SEPARATION OF POWERS IS NOT  
DEAD IN HAITI. THE GOVERNMENT IS REPORTEDLY MOBILIZING  
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TRANSPORTATION TO BRING PEOPLE IN FROM THE COUNTRY FOR  
A MASS RALLY ON THE 22ND (A TECHNIQUE MUCH FAVORED BY  
FRANCOIS DUVALIER BUT LATELY FALLEN INTO DISUSE).

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P R 211736Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4735

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 1441

AMBASSADOR SALOMON HAS QUIETLY RETURNED TO THE CAPITAL.

CLEARLY SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT IS AFOOT.

6. CONCLUSIONS: WE THINK THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME OF ALL THIS ACTIVITY WILL BE AN EFFORT BY THE PRESIDENT TO SHAKE UP THE COMPLACENT DUVALIERIST BUREAUCRACY AND ACCELERATE THE PACE OF HIS CAUTIOUS ADVANCE TOWARD FORMS OF RULE MORE SUITED TO THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF THE TIME. WHAT PRECISE CHANGES HE WOULD ENVISAGE; WHEN HE PLANS TO MAKE THEM; HOW HE CAN PERSUADE ABLE MEN TO JOIN HIS NEW "CRUSADE," GIVEN HIS OWN PAST FAILURE TO BACK UP EXCEPTIONALLY COMPETENT ADMINISTRATORS SUCH AS EX-PUBLIC MINISTER PETIT; AND WHETHER HE CAN DO ENOUGH TO EARN THE SUPPORT OF THE YOUNGER, PROGRESSIVE, DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED FORCES WITHOUT PROVOKING A PREEMPTIVE REACTION FROM THE OLD GUARD -- SUCH QUESTIONS REMAIN OPEN TO CONJECTURE.

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## Message Attributes

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